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8
9 IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
10 EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

11 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
12
Plaintiff,
13
v.
14 EVARISTO GOMEZ & MARIA MUNOZ,
15
Defendants.
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CASE NO. 1:20-CR-00123-DAD-BAM

STIPULATION TO CONTINUE STATUS
CONFERENCE AND EXCLUDE TIME UNDER
SPEEDY TRIAL ACT; AND ORDER

17 This case is set for status conference on October 13, 2020. On May 13, 2020, this Court issued
18 General Order 618, which suspends all jury trials in the Eastern District of California “until further
19 notice.” Further, pursuant to General Order 611, this Court’s declaration of judicial emergency under 18
20 U.S.C. § 3174, and the Ninth Circuit Judicial Council’s Order of April 16, 2020 continuing this Court’s
21 judicial emergency, this Court has allowed district judges to continue all criminal matters to a date after
22 May 2, 2021.¹ This and previous General Orders, as well as the declarations of judicial emergency,
23 were entered to address public health concerns related to COVID-19.

24 Although the General Orders and declarations of emergency address the district-wide health
25 concern, the Supreme Court has emphasized that the Speedy Trial Act’s end-of-justice provision
26 “counteract[s] substantive openendedness with procedural strictness,” “demand[ing] on-the-record
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28 ¹ A judge “may order case-by-case exceptions” at the discretion of that judge “or upon the
request of counsel, after consultation with counsel and the Clerk of the Court to the extent such an order
will impact court staff and operations.” General Order 618, ¶ 7 (E.D. Cal. May 13, 2020).

findings” in a particular case. *Zedner v. United States*, 547 U.S. 489, 509 (2006). “[W]ithout on-the-record findings, there can be no exclusion under” § 3161(h)(7)(A). *Id.* at 507. Moreover, any such failure cannot be harmless. *Id.* at 509; *see also United States v. Ramirez-Cortez*, 213 F.3d 1149, 1153 (9th Cir. 2000) (explaining that a judge ordering an ends-of-justice continuance must set forth explicit findings on the record “either orally or in writing”).

Based on the plain text of the Speedy Trial Act—which *Zedner* emphasizes as both mandatory and inexcusable—General Orders 611, 612, 617, and 618 and the subsequent declaration of judicial emergency require specific supplementation. Ends-of-justice continuances are excludable only if “the judge granted such continuance on the basis of his findings that the ends of justice served by taking such action outweigh the best interest of the public and the defendant in a speedy trial.” 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A). Moreover, no such period is excludable unless “the court sets forth, in the record of the case, either orally or in writing, its reason or finding that the ends of justice served by the granting of such continuance outweigh the best interests of the public and the defendant in a speedy trial.” *Id.*

The General Orders and declaration of judicial emergency exclude delay in the “ends of justice.” 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7) (Local Code T4). Although the Speedy Trial Act does not directly address continuances stemming from pandemics, natural disasters, or other emergencies, this Court has discretion to order a continuance in such circumstances. For example, the Ninth Circuit affirmed a two-week ends-of-justice continuance following Mt. St. Helens’ eruption. *Furlow v. United States*, 644 F.2d 764 (9th Cir. 1981). The court recognized that the eruption made it impossible for the trial to proceed. *Id.* at 767-68; *see also United States v. Correa*, 182 F. Supp. 326, 329 (S.D.N.Y. 2001) (citing *Furlow* to exclude time following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the resultant public emergency). The coronavirus is posing a similar, albeit more enduring, barrier to the prompt proceedings mandated by the statutory rules.

In light of the societal context created by the foregoing, this Court should consider the following case-specific facts in finding excludable delay appropriate in this particular case under the ends-of-justice exception, § 3161(h)(7) (Local Code T4).²

² The parties note that General Order 612 acknowledges that a district judge may make “additional findings to support the exclusion” at the judge’s discretion. General Order 612, ¶ 5 (E.D. Cal. March 18, 2020).

STIPULATION

Plaintiff United States of America, by and through its counsel of record, and defendant, by and through defendant's counsel of record, hereby stipulate as follows:

1. By previous order, this matter was set for status on October 13, 2020.

2. By this stipulation, the parties now move to continue the status conference until December 9, 2020, and to exclude time between October 13, 2020, and December 9, 2020, under 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A), B(iv) [Local Code T4].

3. The parties agree and stipulate, and request that the Court find the following:

a) The government has represented that the discovery associated with this case has been either produced directly to counsel and/or made available for inspection and copying.

b) Counsel for defendants desire additional time to meet with their clients, to review discovery, pursue investigation, and discuss possible resolution with the government.

c) Counsel for defendants believe that failure to grant the above-requested continuance would deny them the reasonable time necessary for effective preparation, taking into account the exercise of due diligence.

d) The government does not object to the continuance.

e) Based on the above-stated findings, the ends of justice served by continuing the case as requested outweigh the interest of the public and the defendant in a trial within the original date prescribed by the Speedy Trial Act.

f) For the purpose of computing time under the Speedy Trial Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3161, et seq., within which trial must commence, the time period of October 13, 2020 to December 9, 2020, inclusive, is deemed excludable pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A), B(iv) [Local Code T4] because it results from a continuance granted by the Court at defendant's request on the basis of the Court's finding that the ends of justice served by taking such action outweigh the best interest of the public and the defendant in a speedy trial and because, once filed, the court will need time to consider the proposed plea agreement.

4. Nothing in this stipulation and order shall preclude a finding that other provisions of the Speedy Trial Act dictate that additional time periods are excludable from the period within which a trial

1 must commence.

2 IT IS SO STIPULATED.

3
4 Dated: October 7, 2020

5 MCGREGOR W. SCOTT
6 United States Attorney

7 /s/ LAURA D. WITHERS
8 LAURA D. WITHERS
9 Assistant United States Attorney

10 Dated: October 7, 2020

11 /s/ CARRIE McCREARY
12 CARRIE McCREARY
13 Counsel for Defendant
14 MARIA MUNOZ

15 Dated: October 7, 2020

16 /s/ MELISSA BALOIAN
17 MELISSA BALOIAN
18 Counsel for Defendant
19 EVARISTO GOMEZ

20 **ORDER**

21 IT IS SO ORDERED that the Status Conference is continued from October 13, 2020 to **December**
22 **9, 2020, at 1:00 p.m. before Magistrate Judge Barbara A. McAuliffe.** Time is excluded pursuant to
23 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A), B(iv).

24 IT IS SO ORDERED.

25 Dated: October 7, 2020

26 /s/ Barbara A. McAuliffe
27 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE
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